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## 2014 Morgan Creek-Prairie Basin Allotment NMFS Monitoring Report

### Prepared by Salmon-Challis National Forest Range and Fisheries staff

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### 1. Overview of proposed action and actual management (e.g., livestock numbers, on-off dates for each Unit, etc.).

The Morgan Creek-Prairie Basin Allotment is currently permitted for 1,225 cow/calf pairs and 51 horses from 6/1 to 10/31. It is managed under a three pasture rest rotation system, with each pasture receiving rest one in three years. Entry into the units is staggered such that entry occurs in a different unit every year.

A suspension of 25 percent of the term grazing privilege was in place for the 2013 and 2014 grazing seasons. The 25 percent suspension is for a reduced season of authorized use for the 2013 and 2014 grazing seasons. On National Forest System Lands the season of use is from June 15 to October 7. Permittees were advised that late entry onto the allotment would not authorize permittees to stay past 10/7/14. If no further violations related to the 2012 Suspension Letter occur, the suspended season will be restored in the year 2015.

#### Permitted Use

Permittee	No. and Class	Permit Type	Season of Use	Head Months
Delbert Hughes	416 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	2093
Jim Dowton	194 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	976
Chamberlain Ranch	299 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	1504
Jim Martiny	180 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	905
Ben O'Neal	104 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	523
Jones Estate	32 cow/calf	Term	6/01-10/31	161
Jones Estate	51 horses	Term	6/01-10/31	257

#### Authorized Use for 2014

Permittee	No. and Class	Permit Type	Season of Use	Head Months
Delbert Hughes	180 cow/calf	Term	06/15-10/7	681
Jim Dowton	0 cow/calf	Term	non-use	non-use
Chamberlain Ranch	299 cow/calf	Term	6/15-10/7	1130
Jim Martiny	180 cow/calf	Term	6/15-10/7	681



Ben O'Neal	104 cow/calf	Term	6/15-10/7	393
Jones Estate	0 cow/calf	Term	non-use	non-use
Jones Estate <sup>A</sup>	38 horses	Term	06/15-10/7	144

<sup>A</sup>Jones is under a 25% suspension of horse numbers and season of use.

#### Pasture Rotation for 2014

Unit	Number	On-Date	Off-Date
Unit 1 (BLM)	0	Rest	Rest
Unit 1 (FS)	0	Rest	Rest
Unit 3 (FS)	763 cow/calf & 38 horses	6/15	8/15
Unit 2 Morgan-Prairie (FS)	763 cow/calf & 38 horses	8/16	10/7

#### Actual use for 2014 season displayed below.

Unit	Number	On-Date	Off-Date
Unit 1 (BLM)	0	Rest	Rest
Unit 1 (FS)	0	Rest	Rest
Unit 3 (FS)	663 cow/calf, 100 yearlings, & 38 horses	6/30	7/19
Unit 2 Morgan-Prairie (FS)	663 cow/calf, 100 yearlings, & 38 horses	7/20	9/25
Unit 2 Block Creek & Morgan Creek	663 cow/calf & 100 yearlings	10/1	10/7

- Results from all implementation and effectiveness monitoring identified as part of the proposed action and this Opinion (term and condition 1), including required annual use indicator monitoring (i.e., stubble height, riparian shrub utilization, streambank alteration), photo point monitoring, seral condition, bank stability, water temperature, sediment, and W:D.



## Implementation

### 2014 End of Season Monitoring Results

Unit – Creek	Monitoring Attribute	Standard for 2014	2014 End of Season Results
Unit 3 – Corral Creek #14	Greenline stubble	$\geq 6''$	13.3''
	Bank alteration	< 15%	1%
	Browse Use	<30%	13.6%
Unit 3 – Corral Creek #15	Greenline stubble	$\geq 6''$	16''
	Bank alteration	< 15%	0 %
	Browse Use	<30%	10.5%
Unit 2 – Prairie Basin Opal Creek	Greenline stubble	$\geq 4''$	5.7''
	Bank alteration	<20%	13%
	Browse Use	<30%	24.7%
Unit 2-Prairie Basin Panther Creek	Greenline stubble	$\geq 4''$	5.9''
	Bank alteration	<20%	5%
	Browse Use	<30%	10%
Unit 2 – Prairie Basin Panther Creek (Ed's Meadow)	Greenline stubble	$\geq 4''$	9.5''
	Bank alteration	<20%	3%
	Browse Use	<30%	10%
Unit 2 – Prairie Basin Panther Creek Association Pasture	Greenline stubble	$\geq 4''$	10.1''
	Bank alteration	<20%	10%
	Browse Use	<30%	10%

Effectiveness monitoring was collected in the Morgan Creek Allotment at 10 site locations.



Study	Location	Year	Greenline Ecological Status	Wetland Rating	Winward Greenline Stability Rating	Streambank Stability %	Greenline Width (m)	Shade Index
PBSC2	Blue Fork Silver Creek	2014	82	58	5.93	86	3.46	0.11
MCGL1	Annie Rooney	2014	49	55	4.69	29	4.74	0.03
MCGL2	Morgan Creek	2014	83	79	6.99	99	4.57	0.19
MCGL3	Morgan Creek	2014	86	75	7.13	95	5.96	0.08
MCGL5	Morgan Creek	2014	89	81	7.34	86	2.45	0.18
MCGL8	Van Horn Creek	2014	73	66	6.39	83	3.8	0.19
MCGL9	Trail Creek	2014	71	64	6.46	88	2.49	0.11
MCGL10	Lick Creek	2014	65	60	5.74	76	2.48	0.11
MCGL13	Little West Fork Morgan Creek	2014	54	60	5.57	76	1.89	0.17
MCGL15	Corral Creek	2014	66	66	5.79	88	3.14	0.17

**Discussion of any unauthorized use and/or any maintenance issues related to fences or water developments.**

Several private fences were not maintained, which resulted in cattle, and potentially horses, entering Unit 1 which was scheduled for rest in 2014. On multiple occasions during the 2014 season, cows were observed in Unit 1. **The cows that were coming through the private fence were not owned by Morgan Creek association permittees, except for the horses which are owned by a permittee but are not part of the association. The unpermitted cows were coming through the private land fence on Van Horn Creek were owned by the landowner or their lessee. Attempts to contact the landowner were unsuccessful. The permittee who owned the horses was contacted numerous times throughout the 2014 grazing season. The permittee was told to remove the horses but the instructions were ignored. Permit action was taken and the permittee received 25% cancellation of his Term Grazing permit.**

The standards were not exceeded at monitored sites in Unit 2 and Unit 3, except one <sup>1</sup> standard in Upper Silver Creek.

Horses were in the wrong pastures prior-to or beyond the on/off dates. Horses were found



as late as November 5 in Unit 1 and in Unit 3 until November 20. Unit 1 was to be rested in 2014 and livestock were supposed to be off the entire allotment by October 7. Because of continued non-compliance 25% of Clay Jones's term grazing privilege was permanently cancelled.

### **3. Brief review of Allotment management and compliance successes and failures.**

Success: The Morgan Creek Protection Fence constructed in 2012 from Lick Creek to Van Horn Creek along the Morgan Creek Road proved to adequately contain cattle from entering Morgan Creek in Unit 1. Standards were met in 6 of the 7 sites monitored. The 7<sup>th</sup> site, Upper Silver Creek in Unit 2, exceeded the standard by 2/10<sup>th</sup> of an inch.

Failures: On various occasions during the 2014 season, cows were observed in Unit 1, a rested unit, due to lack of private property fence maintenance which was uncontrolled by the permittees. Horses were observed turned out on the allotment prior to or beyond on/off date and failed to following rotation schedule.

### **4. Any relevant information that becomes available regarding Snake River Basin steelhead or spring/summer Chinook salmon habitat trends and/or spawning and rearing locations that would modify the assumptions made in this Opinion or result in effects not considered.**

No additional information became available in 2014.

### **5. A clear description of compliance with the terms and conditions contained in this incidental take statement.**

#### Terms and Conditions

1a. All conservation measures, monitoring, and adaptive management processes were implemented as described in the BA with the exceptions of item 3 above, and 1b and 1g below.

1b. Streambank alterations, woody browse and greenline stubble height were *not* exceeded.

See implementation monitoring table above for results.

1c. Each unit with potential Snake River Basin steelhead contains at least one DMA in an area where the risk of cattle trampling of redds is highest.

Yes



1d. No streams with Snake River Basin steelhead incubation were used before July 7th.

Yes

1e. Permittees, especially the rider, were trained to implement the move triggers.

Permittees showed improvement this grazing season. The Forest Service did not have to make recommendation for permittees to move livestock as to not exceed grazing standards in 2014.

1f. Annual meetings were conducted with the permittees to discuss actions necessary to protect vulnerable spawning areas.

Yes

1g. Riding occurred at least five days a week.

Yes

Morgan Creek Association permittees and their riders were frequently seen on the allotment, but cattle were still moving into areas not preferred. Riders and permittees were quick to respond and correct undesired grazing movements. Clay Jones was never observed managing his horses.

1h. Riders took all practicable measures to keep cattle on established ford crossings during trailing.

Yes

1i. All maintenance of range improvements was completed.

Yes

1j. Turnout dates, move triggers, and end-point indicators were outlined in the AOI.

Yes

2a. DMAs were monitored annually in units utilized by livestock.

Yes

2b. The end of the year report has been made available to NMFS.

6. Any management recommendations for subsequent years.

The cancellation of 25% of one permittee's term grazing privilege should address future non-compliance problems.





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Ranger District

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**MIM 212 - Blue Fork (Upper Silver) of Silver Creek**



**MIM 30 - Morgan Creek near Annie Rooney**





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**MIM 32 – Morgan Creek**



**MIM 34 – Morgan Creek**





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**MIM 33 – Morgan Creek**



**MIM 32 – Van Horn Creek**





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**MIM 39 - Trail Creek**



**MIM 31 – Lick Creek**





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**MIM 42 – Little West Fork of Morgan Creek**



**MIM 44 – Corral Creek Tributary**





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Site: MIM 35 - West Fork of Morgan Creek (Not being monitored for Implementation due to beaver impoundment)



Site: MIM 43 – Corral Creek End of Season 2014





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Site: MIM 216 – Opal Creek End of Season 2014



Site: MIM 218 – Panther Creek End of Season 2014





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Site: Panther Creek Ed's Meadow (No site ID) End of Season 2014



Site: Panther Creek Association Pasture (No site ID) End of Season 2014